Met Office in the News – BBC weather service update

Description

You may have seen reports in the media that the Met Office has signed a new contract with the BBC to supply their weather services until March 2018. It's been pleasing to see the public support and response to this, thank you all.

It is important to us as the UKs National Weather Service that the UK public have the weather information they need to make informed decisions every day. This could be through our work with the emergency responders, directly on TV and radio or increasingly on the move on apps and mobile.

No matter who provides weather data to the BBC in the future, Met Office National Severe Weather Warnings will continue to be aired across all BBC channels, ensuring the UK public have access to vital warnings information and advice at times of severe weather.

We are also proud to be partners, recognised as providing great value for money, with ITV, Sky, Channel 5, STV, S4C and BFBS, as well as online news outlets such as the Guardian, Sun, Mirror and Daily Telegraph. We also supply Independent Radio News (IRN) with forecast scripts and warnings, reaching 27 million adult listeners per week (RAJAR, Q1 2017).

Following the awarding of the new weather contract to the Met Office, Michael Jermey, ITV's Director of News and Current Affairs, said: "We are pleased to be extending our established working relationship with the Met Office, who continue to provide the highest quality and most accurate weather forecasts for our audiences."

Over the last few years we have continued to demonstrate our world leading credentials in technology and innovation:

- We have successfully procured and made operational the biggest weather and climate supercomputer in the world, within budget and ahead of schedule
- Our popular weather app features video forecasts and has had nearly 4 million downloads and has ratings of 4.5* on Apple iOS and 4.3* on Android
- Our new award winning Alexa Skill sees us enter the virtual assistant world delivering daily regional weather briefings to your home

This continues the proud Met Office history of being at the forefront of delivering weather services to the world — we issued the first newspaper forecast in 1861, the first radio forecast in 1922, and the first TV forecast in 1954. We are now bringing our expert forecasts to new channels, millions more users and younger audiences on Snapchat and Instagram at the tap or swipe of a fingertip, and thanks to ever advancing technology there are sure to be more innovations to come.

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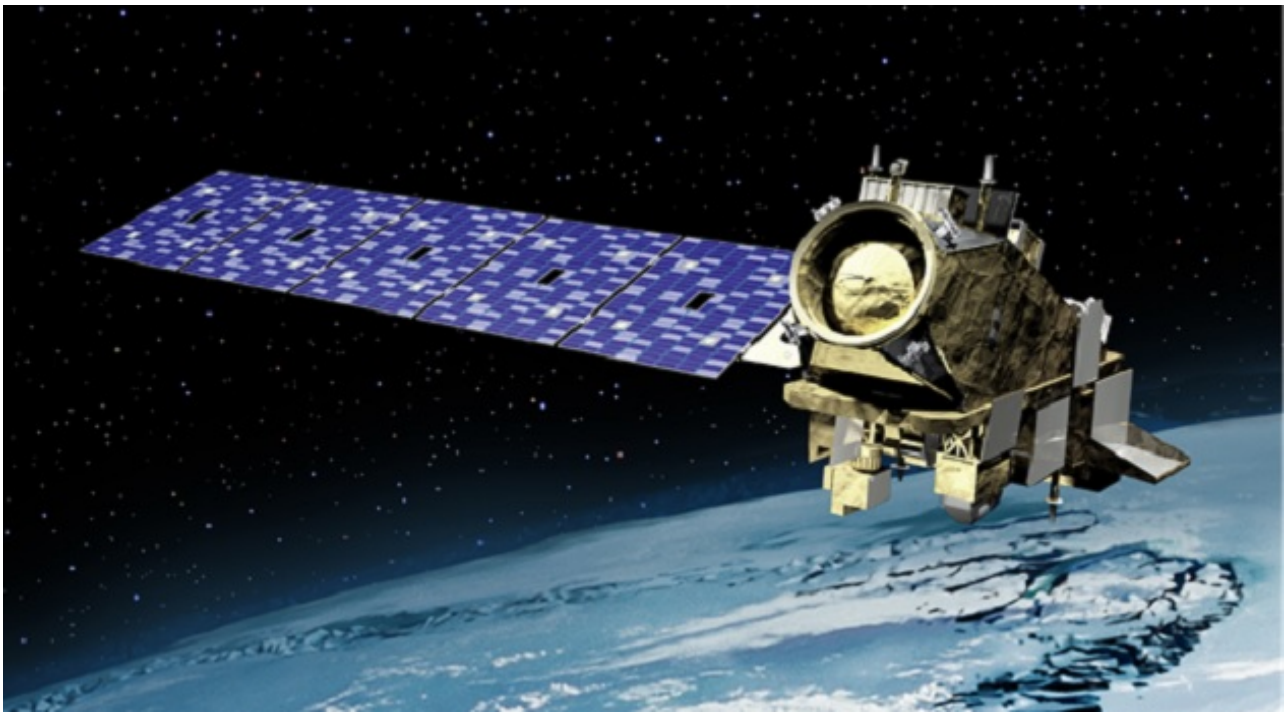
New eye in the sky to help UK weather forecasts

Description

A new weather satellite is circling the earth. The JPSS-1 satellite, launched this weekend (18 November 2017) will provide a huge array of observational, near real-time, data which will be shared with US national and international partners including the Met Office.



An artist impression of JPSS-1 in orbit. Image courtesy of NOAA.

As well as gathering day to day weather data the satellite will monitor a wide range of events such as wildfires, snow cover, sea-surface temperature and aerosol detection, important in air quality monitoring. In addition, the satellite will measure the radiation coming from the earth and atmosphere, vital information for weather forecasting models such as those run by the Met Office.

Weather satellites perform a largely unseen but nevertheless essential role and their impact on our daily weather forecasts cannot be overestimated. The launching of this new satellite from the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California comes closely on the heels of the 30th anniversary of the Great Storm of October 1987. Many of us remember the devastation the storm bought to the southern half of the UK. Back in 1987 the Met Office was receiving very few daily observations from satellites. Today most of the 215 billion observations received daily by the Met Office are from satellites, these provide 65% of the observations used in the Met Office's Global Numerical Weather Prediction model. Satellite data is behind major improvements in forecasting model accuracy levels over recent years, on a scale that former generations of weather forecasters could only imagine.

Dr Simon Keogh, who leads the satellite data, products and systems team for the Met Office, said:

“The value we all get from satellites is simply enormous. Earth observations are an essential foundation on which Met Office services are built. They will help us deliver an expected overall £30bn socio-economic benefit over the coming decade, a 14 fold return on investment in the organisation, and will help us ensure the protection of people, property, businesses and critical national infrastructure.”

Wildfires burning in Portugal on 20 June 2017. False colour image from the VIIRS imager on the Suomi NPP satellite. Image courtesy of NASA.

This new satellite provides a valuable US contribution to the Global Observing System that will complement the data provided to the Met Office by our work with European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT).

In addition to operating satellites, EUMETSAT also runs a satellite-reception station in Svalbard in the Norwegian Arctic, an essential part of the network to get the vast quantities of data gathered by satellites to the organisations that use it. At this latitude the station will receive information bursts from the new JPSS-1 up to 14 times per day.

Svalbard satellite receiving station in Norway. Image courtesy of EUMETSAT.

Dr Keogh concluded: “The new data will help drive our numerical weather prediction models and it will provide products for a wide range of earth observation applications from weather forecasting to oceanography.”

For more information and educational resources about JPSS-1 please visit the NOAA JPSS website.

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